

Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The majority whip is recognized.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to proceed for up to 5 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO THE 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION OF FORT CAMPBELL, KY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to the men and women who make up the 101st Airborne Division based at Fort Campbell, KY. In the war on terror, these soldiers frequently form the front lines. I offer them the thanks and prayers of a grateful nation as they are in the process of deploying to Iraq once again.

The 101st has seen action in Iraq before. They led the initial wave of forces sent to liberate that country in March 2003. About 19,000 soldiers in all from the 101st helped bring freedom to the Iraqi people and destroy Saddam Hussein's illegitimate regime.

After the fall of Hussein, the soldiers of the 101st operated around the city of Mosul in northern Iraq—I had a chance to visit them there in 2003—keeping innocent Iraqis safe and tracking down terrorists. Stationed in Iraq for about a year, they undertook some of the most hazardous duties yet in the war on terror. Tragically, 73 soldiers from Fort Campbell have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty to date, including four soldiers killed near Baghdad earlier this very week.

My heart goes out to the families of these brave heroes. I believe the best way we can respect their memories is to finish their mission in Iraq with honor. I have tried to do my utmost in this Senate to see that our Armed Forces get everything they need to fulfill that mission, and I will continue to do so, as I know my other colleagues will as well.

The 101st Airborne Division, also known as "The Screaming Eagles," is one of the most respected divisions in our armed services and frequently gets the first call when crisis strikes. They specialize in the rapid deployment of soldiers into combat from helicopters.

The division was founded in 1942 and parachuted into Normandy on D-Day during World War II. Later, many of its members saw action at the Battle of the Bulge. The 101st continued to serve many critical missions in Vietnam and the first gulf war. They are the best America has to offer, and I might also add, the HBO series "Band of Brothers" from a few years ago was about the 101st Airborne in World War II. It took that storied unit from the beaches of Normandy through to the end of the war.

The 101st Airborne began redeploying to Iraq in September, and by the end of this month, about 20,000 of its soldiers will be back in Iraq.

They will be gone for at least a year. For many soldiers, this will be their third deployment since September 11, 2001: The 101st was also deployed to Afghanistan soon after the attack of September 11.

MG Thomas R. Turner, who commands the 101st Airborne, expressed the confidence and clarity of vision that all soldiers of the 101st share when he spoke at a color casing ceremony recently to signal the official departure of his soldiers to Iraq.

Referring to the 101st Airborne's mission, he said:

Our end state is clear: An Iraq at peace with its neighbors, and an ally in the War on Terror, with a representative government that respects the human rights of all Iraqis.

Just as in wars before, our country fights not for land or treasure but for freedom. In previous centuries, America has fought to secure liberty, end slavery, and stamp out fascism. Our cause today is equally just. We fight to defeat the terrorists who would rule by fear. And we are fighting to spread freedom, because freedom is the antidote to the terrorists' fear.

As Thanksgiving approaches, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking the soldiers of the 101st Airborne for their extraordinary service. Kentucky thanks them as well. We all pray for their safe return.

I yield the floor.

CYPRUS

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the extremely unfortunate decision by the highest levels of the State Department to meet with Mehmet Ali Talat, the self-declared president of the so-called "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus." For more than 30 years, it has been a tenet of U.S. foreign policy not to extend de jure or de facto recognition to this self-declared government, which exists only because of the forcible occupation of the northern one-third of Cyprus by more than 43,000 Turkish troops.

Cyprus was divided by a Turkish invasion in 1974. With the exception of Turkey, all nations recognize that this invasion was illegal and have refused to recognize the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus," a rump state that proclaims itself the government of the occupied area. Far from honoring the invasion, the world recognizes only the Republic of Cyprus as the legitimate sovereign government for the entire island.

Both international law and U.S. statutory law support the free government of Cyprus. Several U.N. Security Council resolutions implore nations neither to recognize nor support the self-declared government in the occupied area. Likewise, the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act establishes the U.S. policy of supporting a free government in Cyprus, demanding the withdrawal of all Turkish forces from Cyprus, and seeking the reunification of the island's communities.

I rise today because I fear the State Department is now embarked on a different course, a course that may irreparably damage the prospects for a peaceful reunification of Cyprus. On Friday, October 28, 2005, the U.S. Secretary of State met with Mr. Mehmet Ali Talat. I have heard the State Department spokesperson try to justify this meeting by saying that the Secretary would only be meeting with Mr. Talat in his capacity as a leader of the Turkish-Cypriot community, and their session would not signal a change in U.S. policy toward Cyprus.

These explanations are disappointing. In all likelihood, meeting Mr. Talat in the State Department's Harry S. Truman Building will be used by Turkey and the rump state as evidence that the United States is moving toward independent elevation of this self-declared government and the permanent dismemberment of Cyprus.

Following the defeat of an U.N.-sponsored plan in 2004, the Republic of Cyprus has undertaken numerous initiatives designed to bring the two communities together. Since April 2003, when the movement restrictions through the cease-fire line were partially lifted, there have been more than 8 million crossings from both Greek and Turkish Cypriots. During the 4 million visits by Greek-Cypriots to the occupied area, approximately \$100 million were spent to the benefit of Turkish Cypriots. Cyprus is contributing concretely to the economic uplifting of the Turkish Cypriot community—more than \$43 million in social insurance, more than \$9 million in medical care, and more than \$343 million in free electricity during the last couple of years.

According to Turkish Cypriot reports, one of the main reasons for the Turkish Cypriot economic growth is the opportunity that was provided to more than 10,000 Turkish Cypriots to work in the government-controlled areas after the lifting of the restrictions. These skilled workers, who continue to live in the occupied areas, earn approximately \$180 million every year. The Republic of Cyprus has also unilaterally removed land mines in the cease-fire zone. More than 63,000 people in the occupied area have been issued Republic of Cyprus birth certificates, more than 57,000 have been issued Republic of Cyprus identity cards, and more than 32,000 have been issued Republic of Cyprus passports.

Unfortunately, Turkey and its rump state have been working in the opposite direction. In Turkey's negotiation for EU accession, Turkey committed to extending its customs union to Cyprus, but then unilaterally backtracked on its commitment, stating that it does not even recognize the Republic of Cyprus. Turkey and the "TRNC" have pressed for the opening for direct airline flights and direct trade into the occupied area, both of which violate the Republic of Cyprus' sovereign power to designate ports of entry. Last month, the Prime Minister of Turkey